

## Override Study Committee Minutes

March 26, 2014 – 8:00 PM

School Committee Hearing Room – 5<sup>th</sup> Floor – Town Hall, 333 Washington Street

Present: Dick Benka, co-chair; Susan Wolf Ditzkoff, co-chair; Cliff Brown; Alberto Chang; Chad Ellis; Janet Gelbart; Kevin Lang; Carol Levin; Sergio Modigliani; Lisa Serafin Sheehan; Jim Stergios; Tim Sullivan; Ann Connolly Tolkoff. After the vote approving the minutes and prior to arriving to attend in person, Beth Jackson Stram called in and attended a portion of the meeting remotely.

1. The minutes from March 19, 2014 were unanimously approved.
2. Report of Capital Subcommittee – Review of Capital Options.

Lisa Serafin Sheehan presented the first part of the Capital Subcommittee's report. Slides address the relationship between changes in policy and practices, on the one hand, and capital needs on the other. The presentation simply helps to understand the capital and cost impact of the various options, and would be a framework when combined with operating impacts. No particular policy change is advocated; simply shows some options and impacts.

The goals of the Capital Subcommittee are to (1) Test "Expand in Place" Capital Costs; (2) Daylight Capital and Cost Implications of Policy Choices; and (3) Identify/Evaluate Value of Unexplored Options.

The Subcommittee has been looking at two tracks – capital options and policy options. At the March 12 meeting, the Subcommittee reviewed the capital options. Tonight, there will be a brief review of capital options and then a presentation of policy options.

Capital options: In FY14, there are 247 classrooms. Peter Rowe has identified classroom demand for 20 new classrooms by FY19, and with 12 classrooms currently deemed suboptimal. The "Capital Options" track assumes no changes in policies or practices.

The Expand in Place classroom forecast assumes the expansion of Driscoll to a 4 section school with 36 homerooms. Convert 3 BEEPs to classrooms in FY15 and FY16; add 4 classrooms at Lawrence in FY16 (Sept. 2015); add 5 classrooms at Devotion and 7 at Driscoll in September 2018 (FY19). Total additional of 19 vs. need of 20. Driscoll will build 7 classrooms, but add 10 by taking classrooms back from BEEP. Assuming Driscoll can handle the expansion, the plan barely covers the planned growth, retains 8 suboptimal classrooms, without changes in policies.

Potential further recommendations:

- Look at Pierce
- Look at a ninth elementary school, including looking at land not now owned by the Town. That really would get more classrooms. If you think lots of growth will exist in future, then you get 27 classrooms with a single three section school.

Capital Subcommittee has not looked closely at the High School:

- Don't have good data regarding usage or availability or program demand.
- The Capital Subcommittee has been carrying a number of \$70 million, based on HFMF assumptions between of between \$40M-90M

### 3. Capital Subcommittee – Review of Policy Options

Sergio Moldigliani presented the discussion of the various options on the “Policy Options” track.

Students come from (a) resident students and (b) voluntary programs to admit children who are not resident.

There is a belief that an override is required to meet the demand. An override is an extraordinary process. We've done it before, but it's not the normal way that we manage our budgets.

Prior projections of classroom need acted on School Committee data. Peter Rowe was charged to model growth, assuming that there would be no changes in any policies or practices. Thus, he assumed that there would be 630 students in each entering kindergarten class, and 21 students per classroom. That resulted in a need to go from 247 classrooms to 270 total classrooms by FY19.

Tonight will suggest other ways and tools as to how we might consider the problem.

Extraordinary events may require extraordinary responses. Changes in policies and practices can reduce demand. The presentation does not state which program levers to change, but does show what happens over time if you reduce demand by 1 classroom per year, or 2 classrooms per year, and so on. The model also shows how these options can combine to reduce classroom demand – e.g., suspending Materials Fee admissions for kindergarten; revising the kindergarten assignment system to better use classrooms; suspending METCO admissions for kindergarten; increasing classroom size by one or two students per classroom. The model shows the potential reduction in the number of classrooms, how various options could be combined, what the impact could be on the need for various capital projects, what the capital savings could be, and what the impact could be on the annual debt service amount and the necessary override to service that debt. This does not include operating expenses.

Various possible changes to assignments policies in order to achieve better use of classrooms. Give additional flexibility to Superintendent.

- One example, Superintendent suggests that a parent center might provide a more unified experience to incoming parents, and also optimize class sizes.
- If you enroll after a certain point in the year, there will be a seat, but may have to be bused to a school not in neighborhood or buffer. If space becomes available, can request a transfer back to local school. E.g. Carol Schraft's letter on “Enrollment Options.”
- Other options would be deferring decisions until later in spring and not admitting non-resident students until resident populations are better known.

Slides showing Capital and Policy Option Tracks

Classroom Reduction Chart  
Common Space Impacts  
C. Schraft Letter  
Override Options Chart